

Appl. No.: 10/812,123  
Amdt. dated August 21, 2006  
Reply to Office Action of May 22, 2006

Amendments to the Claims:

1. (currently amended) A spinneret assembly for melt spinning a plurality of strand-like filaments and comprising an external housing,  
a plurality of internal parts positioned in the housing and including at least one inlet component and a spinneret plate, with the inlet component including a downstream side which defines a distributor chamber within the housing and an inlet for admitting a melt into the distributor chamber in the interior of the housing and with the spinneret plate positioned on the downstream side of the inlet component so as to communicate with the distributor chamber and including a plurality of spin holes which serve as a melt outlet from the housing,  
means joined to the housing for supporting the internal parts relative to each other in the housing, and  
at least one expansion body arranged in the housing between the housing and an upstream side of the inlet component ~~one of the internal parts~~, with the expansion body being formed of a material which has a higher thermal expansion coefficient in comparison to that of the housing material, and with the expansion body being positioned such that upon being heated a pressure force is generated which provides a self sealing bracing of the inlet component toward the spinneret plate~~internal parts~~.

2. (original) The spinneret assembly of Claim 1 wherein the supporting means supports the internal components in a clamping direction, and wherein the expansion body is positioned such that upon being heated it applies a force to the internal parts in an expansion direction that is aligned

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with the clamping direction.

3. (original) The spinneret assembly of Claim 2 wherein the expansion body is configured such that upon being heated, it expands primarily in the expansion direction.

4. (original) The spinneret assembly of Claim 2 wherein the expansion body is in the form of a ring which is positioned between the inlet component and the housing.

5. (original) The spinneret assembly of Claim 2 wherein the expansion body is formed by a plurality of separate expansion pieces which are positioned between the inlet component and the housing.

6. (original) The spinneret assembly of Claim 2 further comprising at least one pressure plate positioned in the housing between the expansion body and the housing or between the expansion body and the inlet component.

7. (original) The spinneret assembly of Claim 2 further comprising a spring member positioned in the housing between the housing and the spinneret plate or between the housing and the inlet component such that a spring force is operative in the clamping direction and a gap is formed between the housing and the spinneret plate or the inlet component.

8. (original) The spinneret of Claim 1 wherein the expansion body is permanently joined to the housing or to one of the internal parts.

9. (original) The spinneret of Claim 1 wherein the

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housing is formed of a material which has a lower thermal expansion coefficient in comparison to the materials of the inlet component and the spinneret plate.

10. (original) The spinneret assembly of Claim 1 further comprising a filter insert and an apertured plate positioned in the housing between the inlet component and the spinneret plate and so as to be held in place by the supporting means.

11. (original) The spinneret assembly of Claim 1 wherein the expansion body is formed of a material whose melting temperature is above about 500 degrees C.

12. (original) The spinneret assembly of Claim 1 wherein the expansion body is positioned in the housing so as to be exchangeable.

13. (currently amended) The spinneret assembly of Claim 1 wherein the housing is of generally cylindrical configuration so as to define a central axis which is generally parallel to direction of the melt flow through the housing, with the housing including an integral flange at one end and an external thread at the other end, wherein the supporting means comprises a screw cap which is threadedly joined to the external thread at said other end of the housing and which includes a radial collar, [[and]] wherein the internal parts are supported between the integral flange of the housing and the radial collar of the screw cap, and wherein the expansion body is arranged between the integral flange of the housing and the upstream side of the inlet component.

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14. (currently amended) The spinneret assembly of Claim 1 wherein the housing is of generally rectangular configuration and includes opposite ends which are spaced apart in the direction of the melt flow through the housing, said housing including a cover overlying one end thereof and a radial collar at the opposite end, wherein the internal parts are supported between the cover and the radial collar, wherein the at least one expansion body comprises a plurality of expansion bodies arranged in a separated arrangement between the cover and the upstream side of the inlet component, and wherein the supporting means comprises a plurality of screw caps which are disposed in threaded openings which extend through the cover, with the screw caps being positioned to overlie respective ones of the expansion bodies.

15. (currently amended) The spinneret assembly of Claim 1 wherein the housing is of generally tubular configuration so as to define a central axis which is generally perpendicular to the direction of the melt flow through the housing, with the housing defining an axially extending internal collar which supports said spinneret plate thereupon, and wherein the supporting means comprises a pressure plate positioned to overlie the at least one expansion body, and a plurality of screw caps which are disposed in threaded openings which extend through the cover and perpendicularly with respect to said central axis and said spinneret plate and so as to engage said pressure plate.

16. (new) The spinneret assembly of Claim 14 further comprising a pressure plate interposed between each expansion body and the overlying screw cap.